

THE

COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

P.O.Box 4411

Huntsville, Alabama 35802

J. C. Spilman, Editor

Volume 7, No. 2

April 1968

Serial No. 22

CONNECTICUT COPPERS

EDWARD R. BARNESLEY



●● BIENNIAL PAIRINGS OF CONNECTICUT OBVERSES ●●

It may seem paradoxical to say that the number of Connecticut dies is not definitely known now after nearly a century of detailed study, yet such a statement is an absolute fact. Crosby's taxonomy, which was continued subsequently by Hall and Miller, started a new classification system for each year of this series. Consequently, adding up the number of dies listed by Miller does not give the total number of working dies used during the four years of issue, because quite a few of the obverses were paired with reverses bearing different year dates as shown in the following table:

1785	1786	1787	1788
7.2	4.2		
	5.3	7	
	7	29.1	
		1.1	1
		11.1	7
		12	8
		32.4	16.4
		32.5	16.7
		32.8	16.2
		50	17
		101	101

The exact number of such biennial usages has not been established because of the difficulty of deciding absolute identity of suspect dies, many of which are so similar to each other, especially in the intricacies of legend ornamentation, as to defy detection of differentiation. For example, obverse 8 of 1785 is very, very similar to several of the obverse 5's of 1786, yet it differs from each of them in sufficient minutia so we cannot state affirmatively that identity does exist. The lack of certain specimens in better-than-average condition is another reason for our inability to prove more biennial usages. An example of this is 32.9 of 1787 which is suspected as being identical to 16.1 of 1788. They are quite possibly the same die; however, the only known example, (from the unique 32.9-X.7 at ANS), is too badly worn to permit indisputable identification. So in the absence of proof positive, we are excluding this obverse from our list, the same as we have many others.

Similar duplication among other series of Early American coins was occasionally indulged; and of course, after the Federal mint went into operation, this practice became an established procedure, but it was never followed extensively, however, during the Colonial period. In the Nova Constellatio, we find that the obverse of Crosby 3 of 1783 is exactly the same die as the obverse of Crosby 1 of 1785, which is the only Nova spelled with a single L in the legend.

In the Vermont series, as pointed out by Richardson, the obverse of Ryder 11 is identical to the obverse of Ryder 15, the former being paired with a reverse dated 1786, and the latter with one dated 1787. Likewise, the obverses of Ryder 14 and Ryder 34, both paired with 1787 reverses, are identical to five obverses, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 36, which are paired respectively with 1788 reverses.

In the New Jersey series, biennialism reverses itself, for it is here that the obverses are dated. Consequently in this case, the reverses are the dies that have twofold service. Seven of these, C, J, L, S, T, U, and b are paired with both 1786 and 1787 obverses, while three others, f, g, and u are paired with both 1787 and 1788 obverses.

As regards the Connecticut series now under consideration, we would like to review the eleven duplicated obverses listed in the above tabulation, because we believe absolute identity of these dies, one with the other, can be established. Each pairing will be discussed sequentially on the following pages. These data point out that certain things in this series DID happen; when enough of these data is collected, perhaps we can then determine WHY they happened. The accompanying illustrations are from coins in the author's collection, and they were all photographed through the kindness of the editor of The Colonial Newsletter, with the able assistance of his son, Bill Spilman.



Obverse 7.2 of 1785

also known as

Obverse 4.2 of 1786

Canfield and Ryder in their supplement to Miller (Page 4), pointed out that obverse 7.2 of 1785 is the same obverse as 4.2 of 1786. They did not mention, though, that its striking sequence was in reverse chronological order. When this die was used first, it was with reverse R of 1786, and it showed no major imperfection. However, when it was subsequently paired with reverse S of 1786 and reverse D of 1785, it showed a massive die break crossing through the neck to the two fillets. Consequently, this die was positively used with a reverse dated 1786 prior to its being paired with a 1785 reverse.



Obverse 5.3 of 1786

also known as

Obverse 7 of 1787

This die is the popular 1786 "Hercules Head" obverse which was so named in 1859 by Dickenson (Page 259), but he did not report that it was also paired with a 1787 reverse. However, Crosby (Pages 215 & 216) recognized its biennial usage, and his observations were repeated by Hall (Page 7), and finally by Miller (Pages 15 & 20). The latter succinctly described the effigy as having a "scowling face, thick neck, chin rectangular". We surmise that this die was combined first with reverse I of 1787, and afterwards it was paired successively with reverses B.2, G, and N of 1786. We base this on the progressively wearing away of fine detail, such as the disappearing of gravure scratches extending into the field from the top area of the head. This is a suggested striking sequence based upon studying worn examples of the respective coins. The true order can only be determined by careful examination of uncirculated specimens.



Obverse 7 of 1786

also known as

Obverse 29.1 of 1787

This obverse die was paired with reverse K of 1786, and three times with 1787 reverses, namely: a.2, n, and p. The sequence order of its strikings has not been established.



Obverse 1.1 of 1787

also known as

Obverse 1 of 1788

As pointed out by Miller (Pages 19 & 54), this die was paired two times with 1787 obverses, A and VV, and once with the 1788 reverse 1. Since the latter reverse was in turn paired with a Tory Halfpenny obverse (Ryder 31 or Miller 100), and likewise with three different Vermont Obverses, (Ryder 24, 25, & 26; Ryder 28 & 33; and Ryder 29), it can be truly said that this Connecticut obverse is indeed a ligature between three different series of Early American coins. Its pairing order is clearly established by an examination of the strikings resulting therefrom. First, 1.1-A was struck, with no observed specimens showing any die abnormalities. Afterwards, 1.1-VV was struck, its left field showing sinkage extending from the border to the bow-knot at the back of the head, partially obscuring the fillets. Then finally 1-1 of 1788 was struck, at which time the left field sunk even further as did also the lower corner of the right field. It is interesting to note that this reverse 1 of 1788 is one of only three Connecticut reverses to show the superimposed crosses of the British Grand Union flag as armorial bearings on their shields. The other two such dies are the unique T and U reverses of 1786.



Obverse 11.1 of 1787

also known as

Obverse 7 of 1788

This die was used with reverse E of 1787, and was also paired with three different 1788 reverses: namely, E, F.2, and K. Their striking order, however, has not been determined. The effigy of this die is interesting because of the unusually coarse, wig-like, curled hair on a head laureated with four sets of triplet leaves. The hub which sank this distinctive design was used over and over again to duplicate a series of at least eighteen slightly different "Mailed Bust Facing Left" obverses. Those paired with 1787 reverses are: 2, 5, 9, 10, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 12, 14, and 15. Those paired with 1788 reverses are 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.1, 12.2, and 13.



Obverse 12 of 1787

also known as

Obverse 8 of 1788

This is another die made from the much used hub mentioned in the preceding paragraph. In this case it was paired with 1787 reverse Q, and 1788 reverse K, which is a biennialism noticed by Hall (Page 6) as well as by Miller (Page 55). It should also be noted that this reverse K is one of the reverses paired with the biennial obverse described in the preceding paragraph. We presume that these pairings followed normal yearly sequence, because 12-Q is over ten times more common than 8-K. Although all observed strikings of this obverse are defaced to a greater or less extent by reverse die "clicking", it is impossible to ascertain in which year this feature is most pronounced, due to the fact that 8-K is such an extremely rare coin and the very few specimens preserved are in such miserable condition. So the scarcity factor alone probably indicates that the 1788 pairing was the terminal use of this die when it became unfit for further coining purposes.



Obverse 32.4 of 1787

also known as

Obverse 16.4 of 1788

This die is outstanding among the biennial obverses studied because of its unusual press longevity. It was paired four times with 1787 reverses, F, X.5, Z.3, and Z.20; and two times with 1788 reverses, A.2 and L.2.



Obverse 32.5 of 1787

also known as

Obverse 16.7 of 1788

This die was paired with both the 1787 reverse aa, and the 1788 reverse P. Miller knew of only one specimen of the 1788 striking, which he called 15.3-P. In 1958, Picker studied this very same specimen, and observed that its legend actually belonged to Miller's type 16 rather than 15. So he renamed the piece 16.7-P, and announced the fact in The Colonial Newsletter, January, 1961, (Page 2). Further discussion over the new nomenclature appeared subsequently in the same publication, March, 1964, (Page 34) wherein it was stated that five worn specimens of the "new" 16.7-P had then been located. The obverse die was apparently paired first with the aa reverse, and afterwards was used with the P reverse dated 1788.



Obverse 32.8 of 1787

also known as

Obverse 16.2 of 1788

This obverse die was paired first with reverse aa of 1787, like the biennial obverse in the preceding paragraph, and then it was paired with reverse O of 1788. Nearly all strikings from the first pairing show die sinkage at the outer portion of the lower right quadrant. The die was nevertheless reused with reverse O, and was actually "clicked" by it so hard that the date line and the word LIB were raised above its surface to strike into the obverse of the coin those sunken features that are characteristic of all specimens examined. The second and final pairing was 16.2-O as is evident from the fact that some pieces show that a triangle of metal fell out of the border between O and N, which necessitated, of course, discarding the die.



Obverse 50 of 1787

also known as

Obverse 17 of 1788

Miller (Page 37) recorded that obverse 50 of 1787 is the same die as obverse 17 of 1788. Obverse 50 was paired with reverse F, which is also one of the reverses paired with the previously mentioned biennial obverse 32.4 of 1787, while obverse 17 was paired twice: with reverse O, like the biennial obverse in the preceding paragraph, and also with reverse Q. Breen noted in Empire Topics (No. 2, Page 17) that the two 1788 striking were made first when the obverse was still free from die breaks. All obverses of the several 1787 50-F's examined show a progression of raised die cracks, ranging from a few lines in initial striking to complete brecciation at the final coinage. So here again we have another example of inverted year-date sequence.



Obverse 101 of 1787

also known as

Obverse 101 of 1788

Although this die bears a GEORGIUS III REX legend rather than AUCTORI CONN, it belongs nevertheless to the Connecticut series just as much as it does to the Tory Halfpence. It is paired with two Connecticut reverses; namely, G.2 of 1787, and D of 1788, as well as with the widely known 1778 BRITANNIA reverse which was first pictured in 1886 by Betts (Figure 20). This obverse 101 received its designation in our article in The Colonial Newsletter, April, 1961, (Page 1), and was discussed further in the issue of March, 1964, (Page 35). All specimens examined show the legend much worn and sunken, and the right field "clicked" by the shield from the opposing reverse die, D. (See TN-6, page 16, this issue.)



LETTERS

● from Robert A. Vlack

A COIN OF THREE COUNTRIES (TN-5)

One of the most captivating aspects of collecting early coinage, whether it be American, English, Spanish, or any other country is that you never know what might turn up in the way of something unusual. Illustrated is one of the most fascinating pieces I have ever encountered, and it is indeed worthy of a bit of research.



The reverse of the piece illustrated above is that used for the New York Talbot, Allum, & Lee Cents of 1794 listed in Dr. George Fuld's work as reverse 2.

The obverse is that of John Howard the philanthropist on an English Tradesman's token listed in Dalton & Hamer under Hampshire, Portsmouth 53. This obverse was used in the striking with many other reverses of English tokens during 1794 to 1800, a plague period of token manufacturing.

The combination of these individual dies, combined to provide another variety of a token for collectors is also listed in the Dalton & Hamer under Hampshire, Portsmouth 56, and Dr. Fuld's works as Mule 5. This combination created the so-called muling of dies of which several English dies were combined with the Talbot, Allum, & Lee reverse dies of New York for 1794 and 1795.

But, now we come to the third country, and that is the Islands of Malta. In 1814, the Islands of Malta became recognized as a British dependency by the Congress of Vienna. With this turnover, a coinage of sorts was needed for the islands, but England had ceased its coinage operations in 1807. As a result, some worn specimens of the early George III (1770 to 1775) halfpence were counterstamped with the head of John the Baptist, the Patron Saint of Malta. The counterstamp was easily recognized and accepted by the inhabitants as having official status, thus these pieces circulated with little or no difficulty for a short period of time. There was also a great surplus of English tokens struck during the 1790 to 1800 period, and probably because these were no longer acceptable for trade, some of them were apparently counterstamped along with the halfpence. Somehow, somewhere, this specimen became one of these pieces, and thus tied Malta to England to America. I suppose this could be argued that it is still English, and perhaps rightly so, but, it is different.

Can you imagine the collectors of three countries claiming this coin belongs in their collection? I wonder who would be most correct!

MORE
LETTERS

● from Edward R. Barnsley
NEW 1787 CONNECTICUT REVERSE G.2 (TN-6)

In the June, 1964 issue of The Colonial Newsletter, p. 51, I reported the discovery of a new 1787 Connecticut reverse "similar to Miller's G". In February of this year a second specimen was located which had identical dies, differing only from the first one physically in that it has a planchet clip under the date.

The reverse of these pieces has indeed the same legend and punctuation as Miller's G, so it is being called G.2, and the original G is being re-named G.1. That is, 3-G and 52-G are now termed 3-G.1 and 52-G.1 respectively. Design of the G.1 and G.2 dies are, however, quite different in detail, and one could not have been a reworking of the other. There are five principal areas of differentiation:

- In G.1 the branch arm points to the lower left corner of the first E, while in G.2 it points to the lower right corner of the first E.
- In G.1 the arm holds the branch tilting to the right, while in G.2 the arm holds the branch vertically.
- In G.1 the top leaf terminates near the upright of the second E, while in G.2 it terminates at the center of the base of the second E.
- In G.1 the bottom of the pole terminates at the upper left corner of the first 7, while in G.2 it terminates midway between the first 7 and the 8.
- Both date lines are double, in G.1 they are so close together that in specimens even slightly worn they appear as a single line, while in G.2 both date lines are separate and distinct from each other.

The obverse of these pieces is the "small head" GEORGIUS.III. REX effigy which was paired with both the 1788 Connecticut reverse D, and the Machin Mills 1778 BRITAN NIA reverse. So these new pieces may properly be said to fit into both Series. When considered a member of the Connecticut family, we will designate this new pairing as 101-G.2.



●● from Walter Breen

COMMENT ON ST. PATRICK HALFPENCE & FARTHING (TN-7)

Bob Vlack's material on the St. Patrick halfpence is welcome though incomplete. It is with regret that I say this, as he had asked me for variety material during my illness (late 1965-67) and I never got around to sending it on until too late. I will comment here first on the historical material, then progress to the die varieties.

Though Eric Newman insists that no farthings ever were included under the authorization given Mark Newby, the presence of these coins by the hundreds in noncollector accumulations consisting principally of worn-out halfpence,

Rose Americana and Wood's Coinages tends to confirm that the coins did in fact find their way over here. If they were not among those brought directly by Newby, they certainly were shipped over not much later along with other junk coppers.

The time of manufacture of the Mark Newby coins has long been a matter for dispute. The dispute may now be silenced. The coins, both halfpence and farthings, were definitely a product of the Tower Mint, London, during the 1640's from dies (some made from device punches?) by Nicholas Briot. The attribution to the Tower Mint during Charles I's reign was originally established by the following resemblances to the royal farthing tokens of that unfortunate monarch:

- (1) Use of martlet privymark.
- (2) Use of double-arched crown of similar form.
- (3) Use of brass splasher at crown. All Mark Newby farthings I have seen originally had the brass splasher, though some are on rotated flans and some have it discolored; the small number definitely lacking it are all without exception (aside from the silver ones) worn specimens from which the brass insert had fallen out or been pried off by some fool who thought it gold.

Attribution to Briot at the Tower is at once more surprising and more complex.

- (4) The portraiture on at least the original Maris, Garrett, JHU specimen (pictured on the Maris plate -- it is Vlack's 1-B, my 1-A) is definitely that of Charles I and furthermore it is identical in style to that by Briot on the pattern silver halfpenny in BMC, Peck 362, pictured on plate IV of Peck.
- (5) The portraiture would then refer to the alliance of royalists and Catholics against the Puritans: cf. Ency. Brit., art. "Great Rebellion," 751.
- (6) Here is then a reason for the (late?) farthings' bearing the numeral 8, in large or small size, below the kneeling king; the date would then be 1648. This is not to say that all the Mark Newby coins were made in that year; the 8 appears only on 7 obverses among the 85 or more to date identified. Briot was at the Tower Mint 1625-35, then at the Edinburgh mint 1635-39, then back to the Tower 1639-46 when he died. Sir John Craig confirms that despite his work for the Puritan Parliament 1642-46, he still "until his death in 1646 supplied dies secretly to the King." (The Mint, pp. 150-151.) The pieces with numeral 8 were presumably made in 1648, very likely from Briot's

device punches by Edward Wade; they are not of fine enough workmanship overall to be attributed with safety to Rawlings; Edward Greene had died in 1645 and Thomas Simon had hardly begun work by the assassination of King Charles.

- (7) Don Taxay claims that some of the Mark Newby coins are punch-linked to Briot's Scottish coins. If so, that can only mean that--logically enough--when Briot left Scotland in 1639 he took his irons back with him. There are at least four sets of punches used, possibly more, and some letters appear to have been engraved rather than punched in.

Why then were these coins common enough in 1680 to be bought up in quantity by Mark Newby? Clearly, they would never have circulated during the Commonwealth, given their royalist devices and inscriptions. It follows that they would have been kept in hiding by whatever Catholic faction had commissioned them from Briot in Ireland. After Charles II regained his throne, their circulation would have been perhaps easy given that they were of reasonable weight, fair workmanship and obvious royalist-Catholic device though with portraiture then ambiguous, especially on the more worn ones. Nelson records that the Mark Newby coins were specifically declared uncurrent in 1680 on the Isle of Man, indicating that they had been put into circulation not too much earlier; this suggestion was what originally led to the interpretation of the numeral 8 as representing the date 1678. The presumption is that Newby bought up several casks of the St. Patrick coins, as junk copper, in 1680 after the above mentioned act had gone into effect in the Isle of Man.

I can add to the Vlack listing the following:

Obverse 6	••• FLO RE AT REX • Very large letters	With Reverse 1
Reverse G	• ECCE • GREX Large letters as in Vlack B and Stickney 56	With Vlack Obverses 1 and 4
Reverse H	• ECCE • GREX Small letters	With Vlack Obverse 5
Reverse I	• ECCE GREX Medium letters, with small X, die injury through ECCE	With Obverse 6

Crosby mentions another die punctuated as in Vlack D, and I have also seen, long ago, a piece with large GREX obviously cut over small GREX, not the

same as Vlack F, but have mislaid the data. That would be a total of eleven reverses.

Die Combinations and source:

1-A	Pictured in Guidebook	4-E	Mentioned by Crosby, probably same as Vlack source
1-B	Maris plate, others	4-G	Several
1-G	Boyd	5-D	Pictured in Standard Catalog, ex. Ryder, ANS 1914; commonest of all.
2-C	Crosby plate III, 7; others, including Johns Hopkins University	5-F	Johns Hopkins University, one or two others
3-C	Boyd, one other	5-H	Boyd
4-B	Vlack	6-I	New Netherlands 60th sale
4-C	Vlack		

NEW LITERATURE ● ● ●

Dalton & Hamer -- The Provincial Token Coinage of the 18th Century. Reprinted by Alfred D. Hoch, Harvard Road, Stow, Massachusetts 01775. This standard work, originally published in 14 parts between the years 1910 and 1918, is offered in a single hard bound volume containing 640 pages, 550 plates with over 6600 illustrations.

BUSHNELL -- Plate Coins and Medals. Published by J. M. Toney, 2442 Bryn Mawr Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19131. Contains twelve glossy photographs of Plates I through XII and 33 pages of associated descriptions from the S.H.&H. Chapman 1882 sale catalogue of the Charles I. Bushnell collection. Plastic comb binding with paper cover.

Editor's Note: The availability listing of literature presented above is for the information of the patrons of CNL. Please contact the individuals listed in each case for additional data or prices.



Editor's Notebook



In our questionnaire circulated to CNL patrons last year we asked several questions relative to future CNL content and to the possibility of establishing a "Colonial Collectors Society". We would like to pass along at this time our conclusions based on the comments which we received.

First - there was a small but vocal endorsement for a "Colonial Collectors Society"; however, this was outweighed by a considerable margin by comment which might be summarized as follows:

- A nice idea but requires more time than is available or warranted.
- Such societies have a habit of becoming more political than professional or academic.
- There exists - in fact - an informal association comprising those who support The Colonial Newsletter.

Our conclusion, based on these and earlier inputs, is that there is insufficient support for a formal society, and that our informal association of patrons of The Colonial Newsletter is probably all that is practical at the present time.

There were numerous requests for expanded coverage in the areas of "Colonial" tokens and paper currency, and for related material such as historical data and reprints of hard to obtain reference material. As your editor becomes more deeply involved in the problems of those interested in this field, it becomes increasingly evident that the outstanding problem - particularly to newcomers - is the extreme difficulty of obtaining source material on a particular subject, and the realization that - except for very scattered exceptions - the existing data, when one can locate it, is quite obsolete. Few individuals have easy access to the existing repositories such as ANS. Accordingly, we plan to provide reprints of existing data and supplemental data wherever possible, as well as new material.

Finally - our informal association of patrons of CNL - can flourish and grow only if each of you help. Our publication objective of a minimum of four issues a year can be met only if letters with your observations and comments are mailed by you - to us. The only growth mechanism that has ever been utilized by CNL is personal contact between our patrons, together with nominations of individuals with a serious interest in "Colonial" American numismatics. Attached as the final sheet in this issue is an unnumbered page which is a nomination form for your use in advising us of the names and addresses of individuals having a sincere interest in this subject. We will advise the nominee of his sponsor and add his name to our regular mailing list. Neither the nominee or his sponsor is required to make a financial contribution to CNL -- this is entirely voluntary and it is our intention to provide CNL without formal charge so long as it is economically feasible to do so.